

創価大学  
国際仏教学高等研究所  
年 報

平成 23 年度  
(第 15 号)

**Annual Report  
of  
The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology  
at Soka University**

**for the Academic Year 2011**

**Volume XV**

創価大学・国際仏教学高等研究所  
東京・2012・八王子

The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology  
Soka University  
Tokyo・2012

## A Wooden Tablet in Kharoṣṭhī Script: National Library of China Collection, No. BH5-6

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Document No. BH5-6 in the National Library of China Collection<sup>1</sup> is a wooden rectangular tablet measuring 8.8×23×0.7cm. It is identified as the under tablet of an adjudication order. Eleven lines of Kharoṣṭhī scripts were written on the inner surface, while the outer surface is left blank. Most scripts have been preserved clearly, with some obscure ones on both sides.

Judging from the content of the order, this document concerns a criminal case,<sup>2</sup> namely the death of Apḡeya and six other refugees<sup>3</sup> on the way from Kuci to Caṭota. The plaintiff Pulaṃdo charged Saḡamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya with murder, while the four defendants argued that the seven victims died of thirst.

There are not many murder cases in Kharoṣṭhī documents. Only three cases are preserved in the Niya documents: two relate to killing witches (*KI*. §§58, 63) and one to beating a slave to death (*KI*. §144). In all three cases the king ordered his cozbos to be the judge. In BH5-6, the king investigated the case with ministers and other officials in his own court. The hearing took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> day, 1<sup>st</sup> month, 6<sup>th</sup> year of the King Mairi, which is around the end of the third century CE<sup>4</sup>. However, we do not know the outcome of the hearing as the cover tablet of this adjudication order is missing.

The death of the refugees happened on the way from Kuci to Caṭota. Kuci is mentioned only three times in *KI*. (§§621, 629, 632<sup>5</sup>), and two of those occurrences are in connection with the name of Saḡamovi (Saḡamovi in §621, Zaḡimoya in §632). People with these names are known to have fled, as refugees, from Caṭota to Kuci for a few years and to have returned to Caṭota afterwards. It is possible that the Saḡamovi in BH5-6, *KI*. §621 and the Zaḡimoya in §632 were the same refugee, and that all Kharoṣṭhī records of Kuci are relevant to him.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was first discussed on the seminar “Ancient Languages of Inner Asia” held by Prof. Duan Qing in spring of 2011. Mr. Pi Jianjun, Mr. Li Can, Mr. Guan Di, Mr. Diego Loukota and other colleagues joined the discussion. Prof. Duan Qing and Dr. Helen Wang, Curator of East Asian Money Dept of Coins and Medals of the British Museum, kindly read the article and made recommendations which I am always glad to follow.

<sup>2</sup> Judicial documents irrelevant to economical affairs are rather rare in Kharoṣṭhī documents (刘文锁, 2007, p.24).

<sup>3</sup> The number of victims is 7 (4 3), but only 6 names (Apḡeya, Lýipta, Pḡiso, Lýipae, Patraya, Apta) were mentioned.

<sup>4</sup> The King Mairi ruled from CE 289/90 or 291/92 to CE 318/9 or 320/21 (孟凡人, 1995, p. 383).

<sup>5</sup> All found in the same site (N. XXIX).

*Transcription*<sup>6</sup>

Symbols:

- . illegible part of a script
- .. a illegible script
- [ ] uncertain script(s)
- ( ) restored script(s)

1. saṃvatsare 4 2 maṣe 1 divaṣe 20 4 1 mahanuava maharaya jīṭugha mairi devaputraṣa kṣuṇaṃmi eda hastama sveya devaputrena śruda guśurane dhamapala paṃcama ciṃnamavara daḥapa-
2. la [soṇeṭha] ma[ṣḍhe]ḡa tuḡuḡa syaptala caṃkura śamaṣena ldaṣa alýaya [kori] spapaya cozboana jeyatratha arjuṇa ciṃryaśaṣa ca pruchitaṃti saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa [pu-
3. lam]doṣa ca garahitaṃti apḡeya lýipta pḡiso lýipae patraya aptaṣa ca prace bhudartha ede jaṃna piṃḍa 4 3 caṭotade palayitaṃti i[chi-
4. taṃ]ti kuci rajaṃmi agachaṃnae avi taṃ kalaṃmi saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa catayaṣa ca coṭotade palayitaṃti kuci rajaṃmi [asi]-
5. taṃti ṣo varṣami saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa catayaṣa ca kuci rajaṃmi asitaṃti bhaṭaraḡa nuava maharayena priyartha ..
6. .. .. [bhu]ma priyā tasmārtha ede jaṃna saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa catayaṣa ca iśa sveya viṣeye(ṣu a)itaṃti pu(laṃdo)
7. .. (apḡeya) lýipta pḡiso lýipae patraya aptaṣa ca prace saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa catayaṣa ca vaṃti parihaṣati ..
8. .. (matreti) ede mahi goṭhade jaṃna palayitaṃti paṃthami saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa catayaṣa ca maritaṃti saḡamovi
9. klasena kolýisa catayaṣa ca matreti bhudartha ede jaṃnena śamao ekadivasamṃmi caṭotade palayita ede jaṃna[ṣa sto]-
10. ra nasti huati yatra udaḡa paṇevara darṣeyāti triṣarthaya mṛtaṃti na daḍitama na vijitama na kaḡariti na cuṃpitama
11. [u]ti[śa utiśa] vibhaṣitama aṃṇa sakṣi nasti saḡamovi klasemṇa kolýisa catayaṣa ca śavatha śataṃti idovadae

*Translation*

(1) In the 6<sup>th</sup> year, in the 1<sup>st</sup> month, on the 25<sup>th</sup> day, in the reign of his majesty the great king Jitumgha Mairi son of heaven. This dispute was heard by the son of heaven himself.

Guśuras Dhamapala, Paṃcama, Ciṃnamavara, (2)Daḥapala, Soṇeṭha Maṣḍheḡa, Tuḡuḡa Syaptala, Caṃkuras Samaṣena, Ldaṣa, Alýaya, Kori Spapaya, Cozbos Jeyatratha, Arjuṇa and Ciṃryaśa judged.

<sup>6</sup> According to Glass, 2000.

Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and (3)Pulaṃdo brought a complaint concerning Apḡeya, Lýipta, Pḡiso, Lýipae, Patraya and Apta.

The fact is that these people, seven in all, fled Caṭota. They wished (4) to go to the kingdom of Kuci. Also at that time, Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya fled Caṭota and stayed in the kingdom of Kuci. (5) Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya stayed in the kingdom of Kuci for six years. Through love of the master his majesty the great king... (6) ... love the land. For that reason, these people Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya came back to their own country here.

Pulaṃdo(7)... brought a complaint against Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya, which concerned Apḡeya, Lýipta, Pḡiso, Lýipae, Patraya and Apta. ...(8) say, these people fled my farm. On the way, Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya killed them.

Saḡamovi, (9) Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya said, the fact is that they fled Caṭota on the same day with these people. These people did not have a horse. (10)When they should load water and food, [but they did not, and] they died of thirst. We did not fight, hurt, whip or stab them.

(11)Having considered thoroughly, we made a decision.

There were no other witnesses. Saḡamovi, Klasem̃na, Kolýisa and Cataya swore an oath. From now on, ...

### Vocabulary

Personal Names:

**apḡeya:** One of the victims.

**apta:** One of the victims. Sing. Gen. *aptaṣa*.

**arjuṇa:** One of the judges. His title is *cozbo*.

**alýaya:** One of the judges. His title is *camkura*.

**kolýisa:** One of the defendants.

**klasem̃na:** One of the defendants. *klasena* in line 9.

**cataya:** One of the defendants. Sing. Gen. *catayaṣa*.

**ciṃnamavara:** One of the judges. His title is *guṣura*.

**ciṃryaṣa:** One of the judges. His title is *cozbo*. Sing. Gen. *ciṃryaṣaṣa*.

**jeyatraṭha:** One of the judges. His title is *cozbo*.

**daḷapala:** One of the judges. His title is *guṣura*.

**dhamapala:** Skt. *dharmapāla*. One of the judges. His title is *guṣura*.

**paṃcama:** One of the judges. His title is *guṣura*.

**patraya:** One of the victims.

**pulaṃdo:** The plaintiff. Sing. Gen. *pulaṃdoṣa*.

**pḡiso:** One of the victims.

**maṣḍheḡa:** One of the judges. His title is *sovēṭha*.

**mairi:** The king.

**ldaṣa:** One of the judges. His title is *camkura*.

**lýipae:** One of the victims. *lýipaae* in line 7.

**lýipta:** One of the victims.

**śamaṣena:** One of the judges. His title is *caṃkura*.

**saḡamovi:** One of the defendants.

**spapaya:** One of the judges. His title is *kori*.

**syaptala:** One of the judges. His title is *tuḡuḡa*.

#### Official Titles:

**kori:** “An official whose function seems to have been most closely connected with the royal herds.” (Burrow 1937, pp. 84-85.)

**guṣura:** “Title. It is among the highest titles like *kāla* and *ogu*. ... Their functions were judicial.” (Burrow 1937, pp. 87-88.) Pl. Nom. / Acc. *guṣurane*.

**caṃkura:** “An official title.” (Burrow 1937, p. 88.)

**cozbo:** “An official title.” (Burrow 1937, pp. 90-91.) See Duan’s vocabulary. Pl. Gen. *cozboana*.

**jiṭuḡha:** “A title of the kings of Shan-Shan.” (Burrow 1937, p. 92.) See Duan’s vocabulary.

**tuḡuḡa:** “Title...” (Burrow, 1937, p. 95.)

**soṽeṭha:** “A title.” (Burrow 1937, p. 131. *suṽeṭha*.)

#### Place Names:

**kuci:** 龟兹.

**caṭota:** 精绝. Sing. Abl. *caṭotade*. *coṭotade* in line 4.

#### Words:

**aitaṃti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. Skt. *ā√i*. “came back”.

**agachamae:** Inf. Skt. *ā√gam*. “to come”.

**aṃña:** Nom./Acc. Skt. *anya*, “other”.

**avi:** Ind. Skt. *api*, “also”.

**asitaṃti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. “stayed”.

**ichitaṃti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. Skt. *√iṣ*, “wished”.

**idovadae:** Skt. *ita upādāya*, “from now on”.

**iṣa:** Ind. Skt. *iha*. “here”.

**utiṣa:** Gerund. Skt. *uddiṣya*, “with reference to that, considering that”. Burrow 1937, §102.

**udaḡa:** Sing. Nom./Acc. “water”.

**eda:** Sing. Nom./Acc. Skt. *etad*. “this”. Pl. Nom./Acc. *ede*. Burrow 1937, §81.

**ekadivasa:** “one day”. Sing. Loc. *ekadivasaṃmi*.

**kajariti:** Ind. Part. “having whipped”. Burrow 1937, §102.

**kala:** Skt. *kāla*. “time”. Sing. Loc. *kalaṃmi*.

**kṣuna:** “time, date”. Sing. Loc. *kṣunaṃmi*.

**garahitaṃti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. Skt. *√garh*, “complained”.

**goṭha:** “farm”. Sing. Abl. *goṭhade*.

**ca:** Ind. “and”. Burrow 1937, §122.

**cumpitama:** Past. Pl. 1st. “stabbed”.

**jaṃna:** Pl. Nom./Acc. Skt. *jana*, “man”. Sing. Instr. *jaṃnena*, Sing. Gen. *jaṃnaṣa*.

**taṃ:** Pron. Skt. *tad*. “this”.

**tasmartha:** Ind. Skt. *tasmāt*. “for that reason”.

- triṣārtha:** “because of thirst”. Sing. Dat. *triṣārhaya*.  
**daḍḍitama:** Past. Pl. 1st. “fought”.  
**darṣeyāti:** Opt. Pl. 3rd. “should load”. Burrow 1937, §100.  
**divaṣa:** “day”. Sing. Loc. *divaṣe*. Burrow 1937, §58.  
**devaputra:** title of the king, “son of heaven”. Sing. Instr. *devaputrena*. Sing. Gen. *devaputraṣa*.  
**na:** Ind. “not”.  
**nasti:** Ind. Skt. na. “not”. Burrow 1937, §95.  
**nuava:** Title of the king, “his majesty”.  
**paḍḍevara:** Sing. Nom./Acc. “food”.  
**paṁtha:** “road”. Sing. Loc. *paṁthami*.  
**pariḥaṣati:** Past. Sing. 3rd. Skt. *pari√bhāṣ*, “complained”.  
**palayitaṁti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. Skt. *√palāy*, “fled”. P. P. *palayita*.  
**piṁḍa:** Skt. piṇḍa. “sum, total amount”.  
**prace:** Ind. “about”.  
**priyārtha:** Skt. *priyārtham*, “through love”.  
**priyā:** “love”. About *ā*, see Burrow 1937, §68.  
**pruchitaṁti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. Skt. *√prach*, “judged”.  
**bhaṭaraḡa:** title of the king, “master”.  
**bhudārtha:** Ind. “in fact”.  
**bhuma:** Sing. Nom./Acc. “land”.  
**matreti:** Pres. Sing. 3rd. “say”.  
**maritaṁti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. “killed”.  
**maṣa:** “month”. Sing. Loc. *maṣe*. Burrow 1937, §58.  
**mahanuava:** Skt. *mahānubhāva*, title of the king, “his majesty”. Burrow 1937, §28.  
**maharaya:** Skt. *maharaja*, title of the king, “great king”. Sing. Instr. *maharayaṇa*. Burrow 1937, §17.  
**mahi:** Sing. Gen. “my”. Burrow 1937, §78.  
**mṛtaṁti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. “died”.  
**yatra:** Ind. “when, where”.  
**raja:** “kingdom”. Sing. Loc. *rajaṁmi*.  
**vaṁti:** Ind. Skt. *upānte*, “in the presence of, with”.  
**varṣa:** “year”. Sing. Loc. *varṣami*.  
**vijitama:** Past. Pl. 1st. “hurt”.  
**vibhaṣitama:** Past. Pl. 1st. “made a legal decision”.  
**viṣeya:** Skt. *viṣaya*, “place”. Pl. Loc. *viṣeṣeṣu*.  
**ṣataṁti:** Past. Pl. 3rd. “swore”.  
**ṣavatha:** Sing. Nom./Acc. “an oath”.  
**śruda:** Sing. Nom. Skt. *śruta*, “heard”.  
**ṣo:** Num. “6”.  
**sakṣi:** Sing. Nom./Acc. “witness”.  
**ṣamao:** Ind. “with”. Burrow 1937, §92.  
**saṁvatsara:** “year”. Sing. Loc. *saṁvatsare*. Burrow 1937, §58.  
**stora:** Sing. Nom./Acc. “a horse”.  
**sveya:** Ind. Skt. *svayam*, “self”. Burrow 1937, §85.

*hastama*: Sing. Nom. “a dispute”.

*huati*: Pres. Sing. 3rd. “have”.

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This article is created in the frame of the project “Research on newly discovered manuscripts in Sanskrit and Khotanese” of the Research Center of Eastern Literature at Peking University. Project number: 2009JJD770004.